

unfrequent, and in these cases we have no means of knowing how soon Mr. Clark might recur to his original view.

We have already mentioned the ruthless manner in which Mr. Clark destroys those genera which he considers to repose on mere conchological grounds, and it was to be expected that the species would share the same fate; but we were hardly prepared for the wholesale destruction of names which have long figured in our lists, that we here meet with. There can be no doubt that science is burdened with an immense number of false species, arising in some cases from a zeal not sufficiently tempered with discretion, in others perhaps from less worthy motives; but we must confess, that when we see the number of species admitted by Forbes and Hanley, which have been suppressed by Mr. Clark, we cannot but suspect that his pruning has been carried on with rather too unsparing a hand.

Mr. Clark appears disposed to attach but little importance to the characters derived from the lingual dentition of the Mollusca, which have been regarded as of great value by Lovèn, Gray, Tröschel, and other zoologists. We fear that Mr. Clark is as much inclined to undervalue these characters, as some other authors are to over-rate them, for there can be no doubt that the disposition and form of the teeth on the lingual ribbon may afford excellent generic and even family characters, besides serving as important aids in the discrimination of nearly allied species.

Notwithstanding the defects pointed out in the foregoing remarks, we must regard Mr. Clark's book as one of the most important original contributions to British Malacology that has been made for some time. It contains a vast mass of valuable observations, including descriptions of the animals of more than 200 of our marine Testaceous Mollusca, with many interesting notices of their habits, and will, we have no doubt, contribute greatly to the advance of this branch of natural history.

*The Ferns of Great Britain. Illustrated by JOHN E. SOWERBY.
The Descriptions, Synonyms, &c. by C. JOHNSON. London, 1855.*

We have favourably noticed the first two Numbers of this book, which is now before us in its completed form. The more recently published parts appear to deserve the same meed of praise that we awarded to their predecessors. Indeed we trust that the name of Sowerby will long continue to be in itself a guarantee of the accuracy and beauty of such botanical plates as may bear it. Almost the only fault that we have to find with these drawings of ferns is that in some few cases the top of a frond alone is represented, and thus a satisfactory idea of the plant is not conveyed to the mind. It will perhaps be said that it was impossible in the space afforded by an octavo plate to give more complete representations of the larger plants; but when we see how Dr. Deakin has succeeded in doing so in his 'Ferns of Britain,' that excuse cannot be admitted. It is a singular, and, as it seems to us, unaccountable fact, that writers upon our ferns have by a sort of common consent neglected Dr. Deakin's volume. The only probable cause is, that the large work of which it originally formed a part has but slight value.

Sowerby's figure of *L. Fœnisecii* is not so satisfactory in our opinion as that given by Deakin, although the latter is not so good as could be desired. The cut in Newman's new edition of his 'History of British Ferns' (or rather new work under that name*) is even less characteristic than either of those above mentioned.

We strongly suspect that Mr. Johnson includes some forms of *Cystopteris fragilis* under his *C. dentata*, for we have never seen a specimen of the true plant from Wales, although numbers of fronds so named, but really belonging to *C. fragilis*, have fallen under our notice. He has done well in combining *C. Dickieana* with *C. dentata*, and Mr. Sowerby equally well in giving a beautiful figure of that curious variety.

Mr. Johnson appears to have been almost afraid of stating his opinion that *Asplenium germanicum* is more nearly related to *A. septentrionale* than to *A. ruta-muraria*. We have long thought that this is the fact, and even suspected that *A. germanicum* and *A. septentrionale* might prove not to be separable specifically. It does not seem to us to have any very close connexion with *A. ruta-muraria*. The remarks of the Rev. T. Bell (quoted in Newm. Ferns, ed. 3. 260, from the Edin. Bot. Trans. ii. 119) are well deserving of attention. As observed by Mr. Johnson (p. 57), "it is remarkable that the plant before us should occur both in this country and on the continent in company with *A. septentrionale*, and always very sparingly." This certainly adds to the possibility of their not being really distinct.

It is satisfactory to find that Mr. Johnson has not been led to remove *Pteris aquilina* from its accustomed genus. The name given to his new genus by Mr. Newman is rather unhappily chosen; for the younger Agardh, in his valuable 'Recensio Specierum Generis Pteridis,' places *Pt. aquilina* in the section called by him *Ornithopteris*, not in that named *Eupteris*.

We have much pleasure in recommending Mr. Sowerby's book to the notice of our readers.

First Steps in Economic Botany, for the use of Students. By THOMAS CROXEN ARCHER. London: Reeve, 1854. 12mo.

There are, perhaps, few subjects upon which more ignorance prevails than the origin and nature of the numerous products of the animal and vegetable kingdoms which are in daily use amongst us, and it is

* We are sorry to see the opinion that we expressed in favour of the second edition quoted as if it was necessarily applicable to the so-called third edition. The great change that has been made in the names, in some cases to the total neglect of the recognized laws of botanical nomenclature, renders this last book far less valuable than its predecessors, and we do not think that some of the other alterations made in it are judicious. The introduction of an erroneous nomenclature into a book written for popular use is especially to be deprecated, as it tends greatly to the establishment, amongst lovers of plants, who are not scientific, of a set of names which botanists must reject.